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SUBJECT: LETTER TO THE SECRETARY FROM SPANISH FM MORATINOS
RE COOPERATION IN AFRICA

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On April 25, Post received from MFA's Africa desk a copy of a letter from Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos to the Secretary. It is not clear to our contacts at the Ministry

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whether a signed original will be delivered. Post has sent the letter to Spain desk via e-mail. Spanish Vice President Fernandez de la Vega recently highlighted the importance of Africa for Spain as it combats illegal immigration and other transnational issues. In their conversation on March 30, Ambassador Aguirre and Moratinos briefly noted that the US and Spain share common interests in Africa and this might be a fruitful area for cooperation (reftel). We suspect this conversation is the genesis of this letter.

An informal translation follows:

MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND COOPERATION

Madrid, April 17, 2006

Ms. Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State

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United States of America
WASHINGTON

(handwritten) Dear Condi:

I would like to share with you some thoughts about Africa and inform you of a number of initiatives that the Spanish Government is promoting in that region. In Spain there is growing awareness of the magnitude of the challenges that the continent faces, along with the emergence of a new, more encouraging reality, embodied by programs such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the work of organizations such as the African Union, which warrant the support of the international community. I myself in a trip last December to several sub-Saharan countries, and in other previous trips, have been able to acquire a more precise understanding of the situation on the ground.

Owing to its geographical and historical proximity, Spain is particularly sensitive to problems affecting Africa and is promoting specific responses that I think can enhance broader initiatives, such as the G-8's Plan for Africa, promoted to a large extent thanks to US leadership.

In recent days, the media have given broad coverage to the desperate attempts of immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa to reach Spanish shores and those of European countries at serious risk to their lives. We have, therefore, initiated an intense process of cooperation with Mauritania to deal with this problem. Our cooperation with Mauritania is linked with cooperation we have been involved in for some time with

Morocco in relation to this same phenomenon, and both show that it is possible for European and African countries to reach agreement on operational mechanisms for collaboration in an area as complex as illegal immigration.

In order to broaden and strengthen these mechanisms, Spain, together with Morocco and France, and with the support of the Commission of the European Union, is promoting a Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development, to be held in Rabat this July. We hope that the Conference, for which preparations are quite advanced, will establish practical systems of cooperation between the countries of origin, transit and destination of irregular migratory flows. The idea is to generate co-responsibility among all the affected countries to facilitate orderly management of such flows.

The Rabat Conference is one of the initiatives on which Spain is currently working under its African policy. We are also working on the following:

- At the end of May, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, a Ministerial Conference on Terrorism will take place in Madrid with the participation of Central and West African countries, mostly from the Sahel region. The objective is to adopt a Plan of Action for the region to improve and develop the legal and judicial framework for counterterrorism, and to identify technical assistance needs, an area in which Spain intends to substantially increase its contributions.

- During this legislative period, Spain will increase its Official Development Aid (ODA) from 0.23% to 0.5% of GDP. Taking into account Spanish GDP growth, this amounts to an increase of over 100% in ODA over a four-year period. A substantial part of this growth will be devoted to Africa, whose percentage of total Spanish ODA will be substantially increased.

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- Spain intends to make 150 troops available to the EU military operation to strengthen MONUC during the upcoming electoral process in the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo). Spain also has military observers stationed in other conflict zones on the continent, such as Ethiopia-Eritrea and Sudan. In the case of Sudan, we are studying ways to support the new UN operation that will continue the stabilization work initiated by AMIS.

- The Vice President of the Spanish Government and the Prime Minister of Mozambique recently held a conference on gender issues in Africa in Maputo, which was attended by a large number of Spanish and African dignitaries. We intend to continue this mechanism in the future, because of the essential importance we give gender issues in Africa.

- In 2008, Spain will hold the Zaragoza International Exposition, which will be devoted to the subject of water. Because of the importance to Africa of water issues, we are promoting a series of activities to promote full participation in the Expo by African countries, particularly the least developed.

- This year a Casa Africa will be opened in the city of Las Palmas in the Canary Islands. Casa Africa will organize all types of activities relating to Africa and strengthen ties between Spain and our African neighbors.

We expect to speak about these and other subjects this week with Alpha Omar Konare, Chairperson of the African Union Commission * where Spanish is an official language - when he arrives in Spain on an official visit.

I am very aware of the priority the United States places on its relations with Africa, and the importance of the U.S. presence on that continent. I therefore think it would be

very useful to strengthen the cooperation between our two countries on African matters. As allies, we must try to join efforts and collaborate fully in seeking solutions to the problems afflicting African countries. Spain, as a neighbor to Africa, cannot afford to act any other way.

I therefore would propose that we initiate regular political consultations on African matters, in order to make greater coordination possible between our two countries in this field also.

(handwritten) Convinced that we will be able to initiate this new type of consultations and with my cordial regards as always.

Yours ever,

(signature) Miguel
Miguel Angel Moratinos
FITZPATRICK